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ON
RECONCILIATION

AND
COMMUNION

WITH GOD.

BEING THE
SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON

PREACHED AT

The NEW CHAPEL,

DAGGER-LANE,

AT

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Reconciliation and Communion

W I T H G O D.

AMOS iii. 3.

Can two walk together except they be agreed?

THE doctrine of *Reconciliation* is a doctrine of the utmost importance to the people of God. It is therefore necessary, that it should be properly stated to, and received by them, or they will entertain very imperfect views, of the *plan of salvation* by Jesus Christ. And although the Christian's happiness does not arise wholly from a *notional*, but from an *experimental* knowledge of the *truth*, as it is in Jesus: Yet sure I am, that for want of proper views of the doctrines of the gospel, their minds are often embarrassed, and Satan gains an advantage over them.—In order then to obviate these, and such like inconveniences; permit me to lay before you,

- I. The necessity of Reconciliation;
- II. Its nature, And
- III. The privilege arising therefrom.

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FIRST.

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FIRST then, The necessity of Reconciliation may be discovered, from the separation which took place between God and Man, on sin being introduced into the world by our first Parents.—Now by this separation, we are not to understand a separation of the *Elect* from the *love and favor of God*; for though as an holy God he always did, and always will hate the *sinful conduct* of his people; yet his *sovereign love* remains the same, because that fixed upon the *persons* of his people before all worlds, without any regard to their *future conduct*; therefore no alteration took place in that respect; on man's sinning against him: for we are told, that he *rests* in his *love*;* which *love* is call'd by the prophet, an *everlasting love*; † because it is a love of which the *persons* of his people were the objects before time; they continue so through time, and will remain so, when time shall be no more.—This, sirs, is the *love* of which the apostle speaks, where he says, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* ‡—But by the separation above-mentioned, we are to understand

* Zeph. iii. 17. † Jer. xxxi, 3. ‡ Rom. viii. 38, 39.

a being cut off from all spiritual *communion* with God. Thus it is expressed by the prophet, *your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you*: * nor can this communion be ever restored again, till satisfaction be given to God for the *offence* committed against him, and we renewed in the spirit of our minds. †

Secondly, The necessity of reconciliation will further appear, if we consider what there is on *God's part*, that stands opposed to the sinner's *salvation*, as considered in his first PARENTS namely, *law and justice*.—The law of God requires perfect and perpetual obedience, and in case of failure, pronounces sentence of *death* on the offender. This *law* by our first parent was broken, by which he involved himself in *sin, condemnation and misery*, and all his posterity, he being the *head* and *representative* of the same. Therefore says the apostle, *by the offence of one, (or by one offence) judgment came upon all men to condemnation.* ‡ Hence it appears, that all men as considered in *Adam*, stand guilty before God, for *by the disobedience of one man, many were made sinners*: § even as many as he was the *head* and *representative* of.

But, beside this *original sin* in *Adam*; men are become *actual transgressors* of God's law:

* *Isaiah lix. 2.* † *Eph. iv. 23.* ‡ *Rom. v. 18.* § *Rom. v. 19.*
for

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for *Adam* begot a son in his own *likeness*; with a corrupt nature, his understanding dark, his will perverse and his affections alienated from God.—In consequence of which, we are said to go astray, (from God) as soon as we are born, speaking lies.* Hence it is, we become *actual* transgressors of God's law, and are denominated *actual* sinners against him, because *sin is the transgression of the law.* † And so extensive and pure is the *law* of God, that it reaches to the thoughts and intents of the heart, and condemns for the least failure in thought, word, or deed: and as it is said, *cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;* ‡ so justice is bound to execute that sentence, either on the *sinner*, or on another in his room: for God hath said *the wicked shall not go unpunished, and the soul that sinneth shall die.* §

Thirdly, The necessity of reconciliation will moreover appear, if we consider the *natural enmity* of our hearts against God, and all that pertains to him. This truth is exhibited to our view by the apostle; where he informs us that *the carnal mind is enmity against God,—tis enmity against his being; for the fool (speaking as he wou'd have it) hath said in his heart, there is no God.*

* Ps. lvi. 3. † 1 John iii. 4. ‡ Gal. iii. 10. § Prov. xi. 21. Ez. xviii. 4.

Natural men have their minds filled with enmity against the *perfections* of God ; denying some of them, and misrepresenting others, and framing him in their minds, altogether *such an one as themselves*. *—They have *enmity* against the *purposes and decrees* of God ; which they cannot endure and to which they insolently reply, *why doth he yet find fault ? who hath resisted his will ?* †—They have *enmity* against the *providences* of God ; which they charge with *inequality*, saying, *the way of the Lord is not equal.* ‡—They have *enmity* in their minds also against *Christ* ; and are tacitly (if not vocally) saying, *away with him, away with him, crucify him.* §—They have *enmity* against his *offices* ; but more especially his *kingly office*, and by their conduct declare, *we will not have this man to reign over us.* ||—They have *enmity* against his *salvation* ; preferring away which God hath *forbidden*, (by the *deeds of the law* ¶) to one that he hath *appointed*, namely, by *Jesus Christ*, altho' *there is salvation in no other.* **—They have *enmity* against the *Gospel*, and the *doctrines* it contains ; for when Jesus was speaking of his *divinity*, and *equality* with the Father, the Jews *took up stones to stone him.* ††—They have *enmity* against his *ordi-*

* Psalm l. 21. † Rom. ix. 19. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 25. § John xix. 15.

¶ Luke xix. 34. || Rom. iii. 20. ** Acts iv. 12,

†† John x. 30, 31.

nances,

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nances, which they wilfully slight and neglect; and what God said to the people of old is applicable to all such; *ye are gone away from my ordinances, and have not kept them.**—They have enmity likewise against his Spirit, whom *the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him,* † as also against his operations, which they deride and ridicule, because *they are foolishness unto them.* ‡—They have enmity against his people, as appears from our Lord's words, *because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.* §—They have enmity also against the word of God; for *the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* ||—From these considerations then, reconciliation must evidently appear necessary to every attentive reader.

Having considered the necessity of reconciliation, let us now proceed,

II. To its *Nature.* And first, let it be remembered, that reconciliation does not consist (as some have supposed) in restoring the redeemed to the *love and favor of God,* for his *sovereign love* remains always and invariably the same, because it has for its object not the *conduct,* but the *persons* of his people.—But to this perhaps some may object and say, does not

* Mal. iii. 7. † John xiv. 17. ‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14. § John xv. 19.

|| Rom. viii. 7.

the apostle tell the Ephesians that they *were by nature children of wrath, even as others?**—Yes he does.—But we are not to suppose that the apostle meant to suggest, that their *persons* were ever the objects of God's *wrath*; for that wou'd make him appear to be of *two minds*, who is only of *one*, † and him to appear *changeable*, with whom is no *variableness*, neither *shadow* of turning; ‡ by representing that he loves the persons *to day*, who were *yesterday* the objects of his *wrath*. But what the apostle meant was to remind the Ephesians, that they were by nature a people *deserving* the wrath of God, even as others; or, that they were by nature *wrathful children*, *wrathful against God*, against his *word*, against his *people*, and every thing that is *good*.—Another perhaps may object, saying, does not the psalmist tell us, that God is *angry with the wicked every day?* §—he does.—But it is not with the *persons* of his people, with whom he is angry, but with their *sinful conduct*, which as an *holy God* he must naturally hate both *before* and *after conversion*; and thus a parent may love the *person* of his child, while as a *moral man* he must hate the child's *immoral conduct*.—But another objector may say, does not the Evangelist tell us, he that be-

* Eph. ii. 3. † Job xxiii. 13. ‡ James i. 17. § Psal. vii. 11.

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lieveth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him?—* he does.— But this passage cannot refer to the *redeemed* of the Lord; because they are *delivered* (by Christ) from *wrath* to come; † but it refers to, and describes the *state* of those, who live and die in *unbelief*, viz. they shall not see *life*, but the wrath of God *abideth* on them: agreeable to our Lord's own words; he that *believeth* not (that is, he that dies in a state of unbelief) shall be *damned*. ‡

But secondly, reconciliation consists in satisfying *law and justice* on God's part, and subduing the *natural enmity* of the heart on the *sinner's part*; the former is the work of Christ, the latter the work of the *spirit*, and thus is the *sinner* excluded from having any hand in his own *salvation*; for there is nothing that he can do to make peace with God or satisfaction for sin, he cannot do it by his *works*, for they are *impure* and *imperfect*: § nor by his *repentance*, for that the law does not admit of, nor is it any satisfaction to it: nor by his *faith*, for that does not *make*, but *receives* the atonement. || In short, there is nothing can make reconciliation on God's part, but answering the demands of *law and justice*. ¶ Here then, my

* John iii. 36. † 1 Thes. i. 10. ‡ Mark xvi. 16. § Isa. lxiv. 6.

¶ Rom. v. 11. ¶ Rom. viii. 3, 4.

brethren,

brethren, we see the absolute necessity of Christ, in the office capacity of a *Surety*; * who in his covenant engagements with his Father, even before all worlds, said, *Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God.* † And the *promise* made, or the *bond* given was equally as efficacious with the Father, for the *discharge* of his people; as though its Conditions had been then fulfilled. Hence it is, that the people of God, who lived *before* the coming of Christ, were equally benefited by the *work* of *Christ*, with those who lived *at*, and *since* that glorious period: the *former* went to Heaven, looking to, and depending on the blood, and righteousness of the Saviour, that *was to come*; and the *latter*, looking to, and depending on the *same* Saviour, who *has been* here. But let us attend a little to the *work* of this our *Surety*, which was to *do the will of God*. Now the will of God was, that the *law* should be *fulfilled*, and its *penalty* suffered. These Jesus cheerfully and voluntarily undertook, for which purpose, *a body was prepared him*; ‡ and when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his *Son*, made of a woman, made *under the law*, to redeem them that were under the law; § and while here below, *love* to his people, and *faithfulness* to his en-

* Heb. viii. 22. † Heb. x. 9. ‡ Heb. x. 5. § Gal. iv. 4, 5.

gagements with the *Father*, led him to pay the strictest attention, to the *work* which he had undertaken, and his *whole life* of upwards of *thirty and three years*, was spent in *sinless obedience* to the *law of God*. Hence we are told, *he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*; * which truth is corroborated by one of his *enemies* (namely Pilate) saying, *I find in him no fault at all*; † and further manifested by the *testimony* of his *Father*, saying, *this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*. ‡ Thus hath Jesus *magnified the law and made it honorable*; § and brought in *everlasting righteousness*; || for the *justification* of all his people before the *Father*; and the way by which this *righteousness* becomes ours, is by *imputation*, *for blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works*; ¶ that is, without works as the cause of God's imputing *righteousness* to him.—But it was not only necessary, that he shou'd fulfil the *law*, but *justice* required also that he (as his people's *Surety*) should suffer its *penalty*, in order to which the *Father laid* (or caused to meet) *on him the iniquity of them all*. ** Here Christian stop, and behold with *gratitude* and *thankfulness* this *stupendous act*! he took ALL INI-

* Pet. ii. 22. † John xviii. 38. ‡ Matt. iii. 17. § Isaiah xlvi. 21.

|| Dan. ix. 24. ¶ Rom. iv. 6. ** Isaiah v. 3, 6.

QUITY from the persons of his people, and laid it on the person of Christ in their room, and thus he, who knew no sin, (as committed by himself) was made sin for them. * By this gracious act it was, Christian, that you were acquitted, and Christ became charged with your debt.—See him sweating under the ponderous load, as it were, great drops of Blood, † with his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto Death. ‡—View him led away to Calvary, § where he bore our sins in his own body, on the tree. ||—There justice exacted the whole of the debt, and there it was, that he gave his life a ransom for many. ¶ Thus we find that he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself: ** finished transgression made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity; †† and peace (on God's part) by the blood of his Cross: ‡‡ and all this, oh! wonderful to tell, was done while we were yet sinners; §§ from hence then, we may see, that mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. ||||

But some (perhaps) may say; if Christ hath perfectly fulfilled the law, and died to suffer its penalty, of what use then is the law? is it not from thence become totally

* 2 Cor. v. 21. † Luke xxii. 44. ‡ Mark xiv. 34. § Luke xxiii. 33.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 24. ¶ Matt. xx. 28. ** Heb. ix. 26. †† Dan. ix. 24.

‡‡ Col. i. 20. §§ Rom. v. 8. |||| Psalm lxxxv. 10.

ABOLISHED to believers?—I shall answer the first part of this question, in the words of the apostle, by saying, *the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.* * But it is unlawful for a man to use it, thinking to work out for himself a *justifying righteousness*; because by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be *justified* in his *strength*; † Christ being the end of the law for *righteousness* to every one that *believeth*. ‡ It is likewise unlawful for him to use it, expecting to gain *eternal life* by it; because that is the *gift of God*, through Jesus Christ our Lord. §—'Tis unlawful also for a man to make use of it, in order to obtain *peace of Conscience* by it; for peace and joy are obtained, in *believing*. || 'Tis equally unlawful for him to use it, either for his present, or future *acceptance with God*; because we are *accepted* in the *beloved*, ¶ and no other way. And whosoever attempt to obey the law, for any of the above purposes, are *dishonorers of God*, and *deceivers* of their own *souls*: and all their *fan-cied* obedience is nothing better than an act of *rebellion against God*: by setting up a *way* of salvation, in opposition to that which he has appointed; namely, by the *blood* and *righteousness* of Jesus Christ.

* 1 Tim. i. 8. † Rom. iii. 20. ‡ Rom. x. 4. § Rom. vi. 23,

|| Rom. xv. 13. ¶ Eph. i. 6.

But

But the lawful use of the law is, *First*, to *convince of sin*; therefore saith the apostle, by the *law* is the *knowledge of sin*; * and again, I had not *known* sin but by the *law*. † It is that which the spirit of God uses, in *convincing* the sinner: which he does by holding it up to his mind, which is *previously enlightened*, unfolding to him its *spirituality*, by which he is led to see *sin* to be exceeding sinful. It *charges* him with it, brings *evidence* of it, and *condemns* for it; and its *sentence* must be *executed*, where the *righteousness* of Christ is not imputed. Well therefore might the apostle say, blessed is the man, unto whom God *imputeth* *righteousness*. ‡

Secondly, It is lawful also for a believer to use the *law*, as a workman does his *rule*; in order to discover the *deformity* of his work: tho' the *rule* affords him no assistance in *mending* the same.

Thirdly, He may likewise use it as a *looking-glass*, in which he may see (by the light of the spirit) what manner of man he is, how *carnal*, how *corrupt*, and how far he is (in himself) from that *perfection* which God in his law requires: by which he will be led to prize the *righteousness* of *Christ*, and desire with the apostle, to be found in *him*, not having on his

* Rom. iii, 20. † Rom. vii, 7. ‡ Rom. iv, 6.

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own righteousness, but his, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Thus much for the former part of the objection,

I shall answer the latter part, in the words of our Lord; where he says, *think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.* † But some perhaps may say in the language of the apostle, we are *delivered from the LAW;*—it is true, ‡—but in what sense?—if you mean that believers are delivered from the *curse* and *condemnation* of it, we grant it; but if you mean that they are delivered from the *observance* of it, we deny it: for in that sense, they are still under the *law* to Christ; § and from *a principle of love* to him, are bound to observe it in *their outward deportment*, because it still remains, *a part of God's word.* I say from a *principle of love*, for the believer is not excited to *obedience* by the *threats* of the *law*, but by the *love of God*, shed abroad in his heart; || but it is not so with the *legalist*, for if you conceal from him the *threats* of the *law*, he will gratify his corrupt inclinations, in *sinning* and *rebelling* against God: but such a man is a total stranger to the *grace of God*,

* Phil. iii. 9. Rom. x. 4. † Matt. v. 17. ‡ Rom. vii. 6.

§ 2 Cor. ix. 21. || Rom. v. 5.

and

and should he die in such a state, must hear the sentence *depart from me, for I never knew you.** But perhaps another may object saying, what the *law* saith, it saith to them that are *under the law*; † but *believers* are not *under the law*, therefore it does not speak to them. Now if you mean that the *law* does not *speak to*, or threaten *believers* with its *curse* and *condemnation*, it is granted, for Christ was made a *curse* for *them*, ‡ and the *believer* shall not come into *condemnation*. § But can the apostle mean that the *law* has nothing to say to *believers*? surely not,—for does not the *law* speak to *believers*? when it says *thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not commit adultery, &c.*|| If it does not, *David* was *innocent* when he committed both, and likewise *mistaken* when he said, *I have sinned against the Lord.* ¶—In short; to say that the *law* is *totally abolished* to *believers*, is in fact to say, that *believers* cannot sin: which is contrary to all *christian* expetience, as well as repugnant to the word of God.—For what is sin?—sin says the apostle, is the *transgression* of the *law*; ** but where there is no *law*, there is no *transgression*: †† if therefore the *law* were *totally abolished* to *believers*; it wou'd be utterly impos-

* Matt. vii. 23. † Rom. iii. 19.—vi. 14. ‡ Gal. iii. 13. § John v. 24.
|| Exod. xx. 13, 14. ¶ 2 Sam. xii. 13. ** 1 John iii. 4. †† Rom. iv. 15.

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sible for them to *sin*; and yet John (when writing to *believers*) says, if we say we have *no sin*, we deceive ourselves and the *truth* is not in us. * In short, the apostle puts this matter beyond all doubt with me, where he informs us, that **WHOSOEVER committeth sin**, (whether a believer or an unbeliever) transgresseth the law. † And here let it be remembered also, that a man's *state* makes no alteration in the nature of *sin*, for in whomsoever it is found, it can never fail of being the *object* of God's hatred.—From what has been said then, we may learn, that though *believers* are delivered (*by Christ*) from the *curse* and *condemnation* of the *law*; yet they are not delivered from the *observance* of it, being in that sense, still *under the law to Christ*: and if not attended to in their *outward deportment*, but *sin* be indulged by them; he will visit their *transgressions* with a *rod*, and their *iniquity* with *stripes*: ‡ and although God does not chastise his people by way of *penalty*; yet he does it for their *profit*, and to shew his dislike to their *sinful conduct*.

But to proceed, although God is *perfectly reconciled* to all his people in Christ, yet there can be no *communion* between him and them; till the reconciliation becomes *mutual*. For

* *1 John i. 8.* † *1 John iii. 4.* ‡ *Psalms lxxxix. 32.*

how can two walk together except they be agreed? and the reconciliation will never become mutual, till the enmity of the sinner's heart be subdued, which is brought about in the work of regeneration : in which work men are entirely *passive*, it being one of those things of the spirit, which a *natural man* cannot discern ; and it is not likely that a man should be the *author* of a thing, of which he has no knowledge. Beside were he to know it, he has no power to do it ; for it is *not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.** Men have no more hand in quickening their own souls, than *Lazarus* had in quickening his body when in the Grave : † for regeneration differs from conversion, as the cause differs from the effect. In regeneration spiritual life is infused ; and in conversion that life is exerted. In regeneration God moves towards the sinner ; but in conversion the sinner moves towards God. Beside, the nature of the work itself shews it to be beyond the power of men to perform ; for it is called a new creation, and who can create but God ? therefore says the apostle, we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. ‡ Here brethren, let us remark the

* Zech. ix. 6. † John xi. 43. ‡ Eph. ii. 10.

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apostle's words. God hath before ordained that his people should *walk* in good works ; but because of their incapacity while in a state of nature to perform them ; therefore it is, that he *creates* them anew in Christ Jesus *unto them*, or, to enable them to perform them. Hence then we may learn, that in *regeneration* God does not mend the *corrupt nature* or old man ; but *creates* a new one :* in which act men are made pertakers of a principle of grace, or, what the apostle calls the *divine nature*. † From hence, Christian, arises your warfare *within*, for *the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other* ; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. ‡ In short, John tells us that those who are regenerated ; are born *not of blood*, therefore in vain did the Jews boast of being Abraham's seed ; § nor of the will of *the flesh*, for that is carnal, corrupt and enmity to all that is good : nor of the will of man, no not of the best of men, for then a good parent would regenerate a child, an husband a wife and the contrary : but we are told, 'tis of God ; || for he, and he only can perform the mighty operation. Now the persons who are thus regenerated, or born of the spirit, are

* Eph. iv. 22, 24. † 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Gal. v. 17. § John viii. 33.
John i. 13.

the

the *elect* of God. But be it remembered, that they were not elected, because *regenerated*; but regenerated, because they were elected; and when the apostle says, *give diligence to make your calling and election sure*; * we are not to understand, that they can be made more *sure* with God; being both, not according to our works, but according to his *purpose and grace*, † which cannot be frustrated. Nor are these to be made sure, by the believer to himself; for though an assurance of them may be attained by him, yet it is not *his work*, but the *work of the spirit*, to assure him of his *calling and election of God*. But diligence is to be used by him, to make his calling and election sure *to others*, which he may do, by conversing with them about the *work of grace in his heart*; as he may also, by his *works of faith and labors of love*. ‡

This work commences, at the time when God first *quickens* the sinner: § which may be called a time of *love*, inasmuch as it springs from, and is a manifestation of that *great love*, wherewith he hath loved him. But previous to this *act*, men are dead in trespasses and sins; yiz. they are dead to all spiritual things, for they have no more knowledge of them, love for them, will to them, or power to perform

* 2 Pet. i. 10. † 2 Tim. i. 9. ‡ 1 Thes. i. 3. § Eph. ii. 1.
them,

them, than a *dead man* has the common functions of life. But in the work of *regeneration* a principle of *life* is given ; in consequence of which, they begin to *see* their sinful state and condition ; for when **HE** (the spirit) is come, he shall *reprove*, or convince men of *sin*, original and actual, of sinful thoughts, words and deeds : of *righteousness*, of the insufficiency of their own righteousness for their *justification before God*, and the suitableness of Christ's righteousness, for that purpose. Of *judgment*, that there will be one, at which they must be present, and in which there will be no standing, but in the *righteousness* of **Christ.** * He brings them also to *feel* their guilt ; and to acknowledge with David ; *mine iniquities are gone over my head, as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me,* † on which they begin to *breathe* in prayer, the language of the publican ; *God be merciful to me a sinner* ; ‡ and with David of old, *Lord pardon my iniquity for it is great* : § and thus also it is said of Saul after he was regenerated, *behold he prayeth.* || Such breathe after more *knowledge* of Christ, *communion* with him, and the discoveries of his pardoning love to them. And what further proves, and manifests *life* in those who

* John xvi. 8. † Psalm xxxviii. 4. ‡ Luke xvii. 13. § Psal. xxv. 11.

|| Acts ix. 11.

are regenerated is, their *craving after spiritual food*: for like new born babes, they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. * Such also, hunger and thirst after righteousness, are pronounced blessed, and are told that they shall be filled: † they can say also with David; *as the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul, after thee, O God.* ‡ And when the spirit takes of the things of Christ, and makes known to such their interest in them; then they can sing with David, *bless the Lord O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases: who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercy.* §

Hence those who before were haters of God; can now say by happy experience, we love him because he first loved us: || those who formerly hated the service of God; are now glad when any say to them, let us go into the house of the Lord; ¶ those who before hated the persons, company and conversation of the people of God; can now say, that being passed from death unto life, we love the brethren: ** and those whose carnal minds were enmity to the word of God; can now say with David;

* 1 Pet. ii. 2. † Matt. v. 6. ‡ Psalm xlvi. 1. § Psalm ciii. 2, 3, 4.

|| 1 John iv. 19. ¶ Psalm cxviii. 1. ** 1 John iii. 14.

thy

thy words are sweeter to me, than honey to my mouth : and with the *apostle* ; I delight in the *law* of God, after the inward man. * Thus it is, that by the work of the spirit in regeneration ; a *reconciliation* is brought about on the *sinner's part*, and he made willing to be saved by *Christ only*. Then it is that the reconciliation becomes *mutual* ; and the two, (viz. *God* and the *Man* who is regenerated,) can **WALK TOGETHER**, because they are agreed.

Having thus shewn the *necessity* and *nature* of reconciliation, we proceed,

III. To take notice of the *privilege* arising therefrom ; which is that of *communion* with *God*. Now communion with *God*, is expressed in his word by walking with him. † And this indeed is what is implied in the words of my *text* ; for if two cannot walk together except they be *agreed*, that implies that they can *so walk*, when a *reconciliation* takes place between them. This Brethren is that, for which every regenerated man is *qualified*, as will appear obvious, by the following remarks.—It is well known that *walking* being an action, requires *life* to perform it ; for this reason it is, that a man who is dead in trespasses and sins, cannot perform the action of *walking* with *God*: but the believer is passed from *death* to

* Psalm cxix. 103.—Rom. vii. 22. † Gen. vi. 9.

life, and is so far qualified for the *walk*, of which I am about to speak.—Again we may remark, that *walking* is an action which requires *light*; because he that walketh in *darkness*, knoweth not whither he goeth: and this is the condition of *all men* by nature; but the man who is *regenerated*, is turned from *darkness* to *light*, and he who was sometimes *darkness*, is now made *light* in the Lord: and can see to *walk*, as do the *children of light*. *—

We may observe also; that those who are engaged in *walking*, require *strength* of body; so also do those who walk with God, stand in need of *strength* of soul; and although the Christian is weak in *himself*, yet he is strong in the *grace* which is in *Christ Jesus*; † and is thereby qualified to walk with his God.— But again let it be remarked, that *walking* is an action that requires *liberty*; therefore our Lord having *raised* Lazarus, said, *loose him*, and let him go. ‡ So also, it is not only necessary that our *souls* should be *quickened*, but that our *fetters* of guilt should be taken off; and we enjoy the *liberty* of the gospel, in order that we might walk *comfortably* with God.— It is also necessary that the parties who *walk* together, should be of the same *nature, mind* and *disposition*: for this reason it is, that in

* Eph. v. 8. † 2 Tim. ii. 1. ‡ John xi. 44.

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regeneration, men are made partakers of the divine nature : not the *nature, essence, or attributes* of God, for they are incommunicable ; but that which is wrought in the *believer*, bears a resemblance, or likeness to the divine nature ; for the *new man*, says the apostle, after **God**, is created in *righteousness* and *true holiness* : and in the *image* of him that created him. * And as there is in every *believer* a likeness of *nature*, so also there is in *mind* and *disposition* ; for saith the apostle, *we have the mind of Christ.* †—But in order to walk comfortably : it is necessary we should have some *knowledge* of those with whom we walk ; in this respect also, the Christian is qualified to walk with **God** : for he knows **HIM**, the *only true God* : he knows *Christ*, and the power of his resurrection, and is acquainted also with the spirit, in his *convincing, enlightening, comforting, and sanctifying influences*.—Let it be remarked also, that in order to *enjoy* a walk, it is necessary that there should be a *mutual love* between the parties : and thus it is with **God** and his people, he loves them with an *everlasting love*, and when in the work of regeneration, the *love of God* is shed abroad in their hearts, they are constrained to *love him* ;‡

* 2 Pet. i. 4. Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. † 1 Cor. ii. 16.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 3. 2 Cor. v. 14.

and then it is, that they *enjoy* their walk with God.—But in order to walk comfortably, we shall find it necessary to put some *confidence*, or *trust* in those with whom we walk ; and this also is what the Christian does ; who finds it better to *trust in the Lord*, than to put *confidence in man* ; and is determined with Job of old, though he *slay me, yet will I trust in him.** Now as believers are thus qualified for *communion* with God ; so also do they (when faith is in lively exercise) enjoy it. They have *fellowship* or communion with the Father ; † who hath blessed them with all *spiritual blessings* in Christ, and as such, has chosen them to *holiness and happiness* ; therefore it is, that he who is the *Father of mercies* and God of all comfort *regenerates* them : then they apply to him as their *covenant God and Father in Christ*, through whom they have *access* to him, and call upon him for all they want, and he freely bestows it through Christ upon them. And when the spirit of God witnesses to them their *adoption*, then they are constrained to say with John, behold what manner of *love* the *Father* hath bestowed upon us ; that we should be called the *sons of God.* ‡—They have likewise *fellowship* or communion with the *Son* ; which is what they are particularly calle-

* Psal. cxviii. 8. Job xiii. 15. † 1 John i. 3. ‡ 1 John iii. 1.

ed unto. * This fellowship lays in the communication of grace *to them*; for he being *full of grace*, out of his *fulness* it is, that all those who are *regenerated*, receive *grace for grace*, and are constantly supplied therewith, all the while they are in this world: for the *water* that he *gives them*, *shall be in them*, a *well of water*, springing up to *everlasting life*. † On *him* also, they exercise that *grace* which is given them; for by *faith* it is, they *look to*, and *receive him* as their *prophet, priest and king*: by it, they *rest* on his *blood and righteousness*, for *pardon and acceptance*: and by it also it is, they enjoy *peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ. He is likewise the *author*, and *object* of their *hope*: in him they *rejoice* all the day, and in his *righteousness* they are exalted. ‡ They have also fellowship with him in the *means of grace*, and sit down under his *shadow* with great delight, and his *fruit* is sweet to their taste. Hence we may see, that there is a *mutual communion or fellowship* between him and those who are *regenerated*; for he *sups with them*, and they *with him*. §—But *believers* have also *communion* with the *holy ghost*, || in his *gifts and graces* to them which they *exercise* under his influence.—*Faith* is of

* 1 Cor. i. 9. † 1 John iv. 14. ‡ Psal. lxxxix. 16. § Rev. iii. 20.
|| 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

the operation of the spirit, for which reason he is called the *spirit of faith*. * The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the *holy ghost*, which is given unto them. † He also is the spirit of grace and *supplication*; as well as the spirit of *adoption*, to witness with their spirits, that they are the *children of God*. ‡— But we may observe also, that to walk with God, is to walk agreeable to his *word and ordinances*, without which, there can be no *communion* enjoyed by us; for if we walk contrary to him, he also will walk contrary to us. §

But let us attend a little now, to the properties of this walk with God.—And 1st. It is a walk by *faith*, agreeable to the apostle's words, we walk by *faith*, not by sight: || and the church while coming up from the *wilderness*, is represented as *leaning*, or resting by *faith* upon her *beloved*. ¶—2d. It is a *peaceable* walk; for the Lord will bless his people with *peace*; ** nay he will keep them in *perfect peace*, whose minds are stay'd on him. ††—3d. It is an *humble* walk; for those who are under the teaching of God's spirit, are brought to a sense of their own ignorance, weakness and unworthiness; under which they walk *humbly* with their God; wholly dependant on him

* 2 Cor. iv. 13. † Rom. v. 5. ‡ Rom. viii. 16. § Lev. xxvi. 23, 24.

|| 2 Cor. v. 7. ¶ Song v. 8. ** Psal. xxix. 11. †† Isai. xxvi. 3.

for

for *wisdom*, and *grace* to help in every time of need.—4th. The christian's walk with God is an *honest* walk ; and here we may remark, that though every *honest* man is not a christian, yet every christian is certainly *honest* in his principle and disposition ; which is manifested in his walking *honestly*, not only towards those of the same church and persuasion with himself, but likewise towards them that are without.*—5th. It is also a *sure* and *safe* walk ; for he that walketh *uprightly* walketh *surely* ; † and we are told, the Lord *preserveth* all them that *love* him : and that they that *trust* in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever ; ‡ viz. in the covenant of grace, in the bands of Christ ; in a state of *favor* with God, and in a state of *pardon* and *justification* before him.

Thus then have I endeavoured to shew as was proposed, the *necessity*, *nature* and *privilege*, of reconciliation with God. And from the whole, we may learn first, the awful state and condition of those who are *enemies* to God.—Sinners, what can you expect ?—your present *disposition* of mind forbids you the enjoyment of God, as also does the word of God in various parts of the same ; and dying so, you must at last be treated as enemies, of whom

* 1 Thes. iv. 12. † Prov. x. 9. ‡ Psal. cxlv. 1.

the judge will say, *But those mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.** But on the contrary whosoever are willing to be saved by Christ only ; he himself hath declared for the encouragement of such, *him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* † We may learn, secondly, the absolute necessity of the work of Christ, without which we must have remained in the ruins of the fall, and have suffered and that justly, the punishment due to our sins, but blessed be God, he remembered us in our low estate, ‡ The Father remembered to love his people, as well as to choose and bless them in Christ, with all spiritual blessings : The Son remembered his covenant engagements with his Father ; which with the love that he bore towards his people, led him in the fulness of time, to come and work out a righteousness for their justification and acceptance before God : and to suffer death in order to pay off the whole of that debt, which was, or would be contracted by them, to the latest moment of time : by which he redeemed them out of the hand of justice, from the curse and condemnation of a broken law ; and made peace on God's part, by the blood of his cross : which peace is as lasting as it is

* Luke xix. 27. † John viii. 37. ‡ Psalm cxxxvi. 23.

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honorable.—We may learn thirdly, the absolute necessity of the *work of the spirit* in our hearts: who likewise remembers to quicken those who are the objects of the *Father's love*, and the *Son's redemption*; he enlightens their understandings, shews them the want of, and leads them to *Christ*, for pardon, righteousness, and eternal life. He regenerates their souls, by which they become reconciled to God, willing to be saved by Christ *only*, and meet to walk with God *here*, and to enjoy him *hereafter*.—We may learn fourthly, the Christian's glorious and honorable privilege, namely that of *walking with God*, on which his present peace and happiness depends, as appears by the restless state and condition of the Church in a time of darkness.*

O Christian, walk close with your God, in his ordinances; for although the means of grace are not *soul saving*; yet the grace conveyed through them is *soul strengthening*.—Finally Brethren, keep close to the *word of God*; give up no truth which is contained therein, however contrary it may be to *corrupt nature*. Embrace it as a *lamp* to your feet, and a *light* unto your path: † and as many as walk according to this **RULE**, *peace be on them and mercy, and upon the whole Israel of GOD.*

10. FE. 58

* Song iii. 1. 4. † Psalm cxix. 105.

F I N I S,

